



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

**Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit
Banbridge**

October 2015

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT, BANBRIDGE, BT32 3DJ (503-6043)

The original inspection of St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit carried out in November 2013 concluded that, in most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in relation to leadership and management, governance and safeguarding the children which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

The inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key areas and the urgent need for the principal and governors to:

- put in place more robust accountability arrangements at all levels; and
- ensure that all arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

The Education and Training inspectorate (ETI) carried out two monitoring visits during 2014-15 with a follow-up inspection in October 2015.

The action plans received by the Department of Education following the inspection were of a good quality and adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The school development plan was adjusted appropriately in light of the inspection findings.

In the interval since the original inspection, the following key actions and changes which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- the school's enrolment has increased from 475 children at the time of the original inspection to the current level of 490 children;
- the school has moved premises to a temporary site located in the grounds of St Patrick's College, Banbridge, to facilitate the building of a new school;
- pastoral and safeguarding documentation have been reviewed appropriately and circulated to parents and governors;
- the unregistered group of pre-school children was closed in November 2013;
- the governors are more involved in the improvement process through regular meetings with the senior leadership team (SLT) and curriculum leaders;
- the staff have received good professional development and support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) of the Education Authority in a number of areas including governance, leadership and management; and
- the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS) has provided challenge, support and guidance on school governance; regular meetings have been held between CCMS, the governors and the senior leadership team (SLT).

Key Findings

- The strategic leadership provided by the SLT is effective and includes clear lines of communication with the governors who are better informed of aspects of school life through regular meetings with the SLT and curriculum leaders.

- The governors have clearly defined roles and responsibilities enabling them to execute more effectively their challenge function and to ensure more robust accountability at all levels. Based on the evidence presented at the time of the follow-up inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- The removal of the unregistered group of pre-school children from the school has allowed the school to address the safeguarding arrangements, which were unsatisfactory at the time of the original inspection, and, are now satisfactory.
- The safeguarding team meet regularly to update and share appropriate information on safeguarding with the staff and governors; the arrangements in place for safeguarding now meet the statutory requirements.
- The key stakeholders have increased access to the school's safeguarding and pastoral documentation through the new school website.
- The quality of learning and teaching evaluated during the follow-up process was of a consistently high and very good standard.
- The children's standards in literacy have improved as evidenced by the review of the school's internal assessment data. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all of the children are now achieving in line with or above their ability level in English. In mathematics the standards have been maintained; most of the children achieve in line with or above their ability in mathematics.
- The parents are engaged more actively in the life and work of the school, in particular, through the enhanced opportunities for parents and families to support their children's learning.

Overall effectiveness

The school has demonstrated the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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